Among Friends
The Friends of Tom Baker

Vol. 4 No. 2
12/86

TOUR FOR TWO - WHOVENT 86

On New Year's Day 1986, Colin Baker predicted, "Maybe this will be the year of the meeting of the Bakers!" Lo and behold, he turned out to be right! This was the final itinerary for their tour:

Washington, D.C.	September 12
Philadelphia, Penn.	September 13
Nashville, Tennessee	September 14
Atlanta, Georgia	September 18
Milwaukee, Wisconsin	September 19
Chicago, Illinois	September 20 & 21
Boston, Mass.	September 26
New York City	September 27 & 28

The events consisted of individual talk sessions by Tom and Colin, each about an hour long, followed by a joint autograph session. In Washington Tom performed first and was followed by Colin; the next day Colin went on stage first, and they alternated throughout the rest of the tour. After their individual sessions in Washington Tom and Colin did a joint question and answer session, but it turned out that there really wasn't enough time for the extra session because the autographs were taking so long, and the plan to hold joint panels was subsequently scratched.

Coordinator's Corner

Dear Friends,

At year-end it's not uncommon to reflect upon the events of the preceding twelve months. 1986 was exciting, wasn't it? We had the opportunity to see Tom in nine different cities, and discovered he's happily married and looking better than ever!

I've been running TFOTB for just over a year now. During the first few months it took all of my spare time to get the club organized, and until recently I continued to spend 15-20 hours per week answering correspondence; processing memberships and renewals; sending out merchandise; planning, researching, writing and pasting up the newsletters; etc. During the last few months, however, I've realized that I need to devote more time to other facets of my life, and since then I've been trying to determine whether it will be possible for me to do so and still keep the club going.

I've gradually reduced the amount of work required to some extent by eliminating most of the "extras" we used to offer (photos, buttons, etc.), but in addition I want to prepare you for the possibility that I may have to print some four-page newsletters. Some of you may not realize that very little of the information we've printed has been handed to us "on a silver platter"--finding it takes work. That's nothing new; it's been that way since the club began. Rather than simply printing whatever has fallen into our laps, we've searched for news and spent time tracking down details. If I have enough material to fill eight or more pages I'll happily do so; however, since I won't be able to devote as much time to research it seems possible that at some point I may find I have only four pages of material to print.

Those of you with whom I've discussed this have told me that you want the club to continue at whatever level turns out to be feasible (i.e., comfortable for me), and on that basis I'm willing to try to keep the club going and continue to provide you with as much current news as possible.

I wish each of you a happy and fulfilling New Year!

Laurie

The Friends of Tom Baker (TFOTB) was established in 1983 to promote awareness among Tom Baker's fans regarding his career and activities. For membership dues of $10/year ($15/year overseas airmail) each member will receive 4 issues of our quarterly newsletter, Among Friends. Renewals are due by the last day of the month/year on your mailing label.

Grounds for termination of membership include non-payment of dues, conduct which might tend to misrepresent the club, unauthorized use of the club name, and unauthorized reproduction of club materials. All material in the newsletter is copyright to the author/artist, and copyright reverts upon publication. Unless otherwise indicated, photographs are copyright either to The Friends of Tom Baker or to the photographer through The Friends of Tom Baker.

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Photo/Art Credits

Pgs. 1, 4, and 5: (c) 1986 Mary Maxwell

(All photographs in this issue were taken in September 1986, during Tom and Colin's U.S. tour.)

Pg. 7 (drawing of a scene from the BBC's "The Life and Loves of a She-Devil"): (c) 1986 French Lesierre

Pg. 8 (cartoon): (c) 1986 French Lesierre

In addition, thanks go to the following individuals for their contributions to this newsletter and/or club operations: Colleen Crouch, Simon Doyle, Jan Grokett, Elizabeth LaCava, French Lesierre, Kathy Martin, Kathy Starnes, and Joanne Walsh.

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ANNUAL CHARITY CONTRIBUTION

On November 30th our donation was mailed to the "Help a Child to See" office in London in the form of an international bank draft. This year's total of £684.93 ($1000.00) comprises 51 individual donations in amounts from $1 to $100. We've received a receipt (see below) and letter of thanks from the HACTS office. They report having raised a total of almost £300,000--about a third of the amount needed to fund their Research, Teaching and Care Centre--and say that they help about 150 children a week to see better.

Tom was notified of the donation, which was made in his name as a combined birthday and Christmas gift, and we received the following response from him: "What a generous donation to 'Help a Child to See.' I wrote to David Taylor to praise the efforts of you all." (Mr. Taylor, a Consultant Ophthalmologist for HACTS, is the person to whom our donation was sent.)

Thanks to each of you who contributed so generously!

NO. 2641

Institute of Child Health

CHILD HEALTH RESEARCH APPEAL TRUST

The Medical School of The Hospital for Sick Children
30 Guilford Street, London WC1N 1EH

Received with grateful thanks the sum of £684.93p. : as a donation to the Child Health Research Appeal Trust. "HELP A CHILD TO SEE" Fund
Thank you for your kind support.

Laurie Yadon and Members of
The Friends of Tom Baker,
P O Box 8363, Stanford,
California 94305-0217, U.S.A.

8th December 19 86

Hon. Treasurer

ANYONE FOR A LITTLE TREASURE?

During the tour Tom mentioned having worked on a series of National Geographic videotapes. He said he edited scripts for them, and member Colleen Crouch reports that also Tom does a voice-over at the end of the tape she has, advertising other titles available in the series (e.g., treasure, sharks, and whales). We know that the tapes Tom worked on are sold in England, but are not sure whether it's the same series now being marketed here.

KEEPING BUSY...

During the past several months Tom has considered doing several different plays, but there has been no word yet of anything definite. In the meantime he says he's been keeping busy recording commercials, and he mentioned in November that he had just done some work for Guinness.

Member Simon Doyle in Glasgow has coined the term "Tommercials" to describe the various commercial voice-overs Tom does. Simon reports having seen two new ones recently, one for soup and another for matresses. Other British friends report having heard Tom in ads for John West tuna (canned), kitchens, and a space toy.

WATCH OUT FOR THE AMAZING "POTATO"!

We've just learned that the Arts and Entertainment cable TV network has picked up all twelve episodes (both seasons) of the BBC series "Black Adder" and that they plan to show the first episode on January 3rd. Watch for the second-season episode entitled "Potato," in which Tom appears.

TFOTB MERCHANDISE CURRENTLY AVAILABLE

- Prices include postage.
- Checks/money orders should be payable to The Friends of Tom Baker.

Transcripts of Tom's convention talks:
- Palo Alto (May 1983) ($5.00)
- Chicago (July 1983) ($7.00)
- St. Louis (March/April 1984) ($5.00)

Back issues of AMONG FRIENDS @ $1.25 each (we'll send original copies if available; otherwise you'll receive photocopies):

Vol. 1, #1 (9/83)	Vol. 2, #4 (6/85)
Vol. 1, #2 (12/83)	Vol. 3, #1 (9/85)
Vol. 1, #3 (3/84)	Vol. 3, #2 (12/85)
Vol. 1, #4 (6/84)	Vol. 3, #3 (3/86)
Vol. 2, #1 (9/84)	Vol. 3, #4 (6/86)
Vol. 2, #2 (12/84)	Vol. 4, #1 (9/86)
Vol. 2, #3 (3/85)	

WHERE TO WRITE TO TOM

Tom receives so much fan mail that it must be handled by his agent's office. We print their address because it's the only one available, but please understand we can't guarantee that your mail will reach Tom or that you'll receive an acknowledgment. The address is: London Management, 235/241 Regent Street, London W1A 2JT.

We haven't been able to obtain official attendance figures for the events but we understand that several of them were not very well attended, apparently due to insufficient advertising. "Guestimates" from fans indicate that attendance ranged from upwards of 2000 in Washington to only about 100 at the first New York event.

Between performances, when Tom wasn't traveling from one city to the next, he was often busy doing interviews. When he did have some spare time he sometimes went out shopping--most often to book-stores, of course! He also purchased a dozen or so country music compact discs in Nashville, and in New York he bought a pair of Nieman-Marcus walking shoes.

In Washington, D.C., Tom visited the National Air and Space Museum and various monuments. He saw Opryland in Nashville, and in New York explored the Museum of Modern Art, Central Park, the World Trade Center, and Grand Central Station.

During this two-week period we managed to add several items to our list of things that Tom likes, including garlic, ballads, espresso, illustrated books about the U.S., spicy mustard, and flea markets!

During the tour Tom mentioned that one of his Burmese cats, Garbo, was expecting kittens around October 5th. The blessed event has occurred, and Tom now has three kittens (one female and two males). Let's see, we believe that must bring the total number of cats currently residing in Tom's household to...seven!

Many of you have asked us for information about Tom's new wife. During the tour Tom allayed our curiosity somewhat by telling us that her name is Sue; that she's a tall brunette with brown eyes; and that she directs documentary films for television.

Space limitations preclude our printing much in the way of a transcript of Tom's talk sessions, but the following story which Tom told in New York surely is one of the most interesting and amusing of all those he mentioned during the tour. It concerns the scene in "The Life and Loves of a She-Devil" in which Father Ferguson loses his chastity.

"When it came to this scene, with me playing Father Ferguson, we had to shoot it eleven times. Now, eleven efforts at high speed and with tremendous heartbeat to illustrate the loss of virtue really took an awful lot out of me, but ten of the sequences were interrupted by the laughter of the technicians. Finally, when I was absolutely distraught and on the point of tears, they somehow--I saw people sticking screwdrivers into their legs, and other men pinching each other with...spanners and things like that. And they managed to stay silent for one take which lasted about three or four minutes, and then they shouted: "Cut! Print!" They didn't want to go again. And so you may see quite a funny performance from me. The producer and director didn't say anything at all afterwards."

Several interviews which Tom gave during the tour have shown up in various newsletters and fanzines. The latest (February 1987) issue of STARLOG contains a four-page article written by Jean Airey and Laurie Haldeman, and we understand that an interview done by Cl. (Connie) Crouch, may appear soon in the newsletter of the British American Television Society.

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

On January 20th, 1987,
Tom will be 53 years old.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, TOM!

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

TOM APPEARS IN BBC COMEDY SKETCH

Tom appeared in an amusing five-minute sketch with British comedian Kenny Everett in the first episode of the new season of The Kenny Everett Television Show, which aired on October 16th on BBC-1.

Tom plays John Thompson, a man who goes to see a psychiatrist, Dr. Kenny, because he's suffering from loss of memory. He explains his symptoms to Dr. Kenny: "This loss of memory is ruining my marriage. Last night I went to bed with the cat and put my wife out. She hasn't spoken to me since, and the cat wants me to take her to Brighton for the weekend."

Dr. Kenny begins treatment by testing his patient's reflexes (knees) with a large mallet. Then, since it's the patient's head that's the problem, Dr. Kenny begins alternately asking Tom questions and bashing him over the head with the mallet to try to stimulate his memory, while Tom exclaims "ouch" and makes faces. The sketch ends with Dr. Kenny telling Tom to go home, and reminding him that it's the cat he should put out and his wife he should take in. Tom's reply (accompanied by one of those adorable grins): "I can't tonight, Doctor--I've got a headache!"

It is with great sorrow that we report the death of Ian Marter on October 29, 1986, at the age of 43. Ian created the character of Harry Sullivan, one of the Fourth Doctor's traveling companions; novelized several "Doctor Who" scripts; and was a delightful and much-loved convention guest. He will be missed.

Condolence cards may be sent to "The Family of Ian Marter," BBC-TV, Doctor Who Production Office, 65/69 Shepherds Bush Green, London W12 7RJ, England. We've heard that there are plans for an "Ian Marter Memorial Fund" to benefit a cause with which Ian was involved, and will let you know if we hear more about that.

Tom's response to the tragic news: "I was so sorry about Ian Marter. We were once close pals over the [Scratchman] script but after that we lost touch. No news about the cause of death (as if that mattered much). But I'm really very sorry."

The Life & Loves of a She-Devil

The BBC adaptation of Fay Weldon's novel, The Life and Loves of a She-Devil, aired in four 50-minute episodes on successive Wednesday nights beginning October 8th. Tom appeared as Father Ferguson in the fourth episode, which aired on October 29th. The closing credits indicate that the program was produced in conjunction with Arts and Entertainment, so hopefully we'll eventually see it on TV in the U.S. Thanks go to French Lesierre for sending in the following summary, and to Kathy Martin for her assistance in editing it.

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As the story goes, Ruth [Julie T. Wallace], the narrator, is a very tall, homely woman who loses her accountant husband, Bobbo [Dennis Waterman], to Mary Fisher [Patricia Hodge], a writer of romantic fiction who lives in a luxurious converted lighthouse called the High Tower. Ruth, bent on revenge, devises an extraordinary plan: leaving their two children with Mary and Bobbo, she disappears and takes on numerous disguises to achieve Bobbo's imprisonment and the swindling of Mary, and to arrange for Mary's daffy old mother to join Mary's now-unhappy life. Torn with despair over the inexplicable upheavals in her life, Mary turns to the church and the local priest, Father Ferguson [Tom Baker].

Jogging home one day, Father Ferguson trips going through the gate and sprawls at the feet of Ruth, now calling herself Molly, who is to be his new housekeeper. She quickly starts the unworldly priest on the road to self-fulfillment, first by filling his plate with tempting food despite his protests of a light appetite and concern about the hungry children of the world. "But, Father," says Ruth, dishing out a hearty meal, "why do people have children if they can't feed them?" "That's what I tell my flock," Father Ferguson states, "celibacy for the unmarried, and abstinence for the married." "And what does your flock say?", pursues Ruth. "They think I'm mad," says Father Ferguson sadly.

One evening the troubled priest unburdens himself to his housekeeper, who is slyly but surely getting him drunk, refilling his glass each time his attention is diverted. With difficulty, he focuses his eyes on her. "Tell me, Molly," he slurs, "do you not find it odd that a priest is required to be sss...ssss..."--he bangs his head on the table to dislodge the word--"celibate?" He beams at her. "A priest is forbidden all knowledge of the very experience that most vexes and confuses his flock. I tell you, if we cancel the sixth and ninth commandments, I could close down the confessional tomorrow." [See accompanying sketch of this scene.] "It is odd," encourages Ruth. "A celibate man," Father Ferguson cries, "is only a half man." Ruth agrees, pouring him more wine. "How can he understand people's feelings," he questions, "how can he understand his own feelings?" Suddenly he thinks of a solution. "Will you marry me?", he asks hopefully. She declines, but tells him she is willing to do anything else that will enable him to become a better priest...

Father Ferguson goes to bed and Ruth follows, yanking away the sheet with which he has covered his face, and flinging away the crucifix clutched in his trembling hands. He cries out first in terror and then with passion as Ruth all but smothers him as the scene fades out.

One night as he happily leaps into bed and waits for Ruth to join him, she suddenly hits him with something new: one of Mary Fisher's books. She bashes him over the head with it until he stops holding her and pays attention to what she's saying. Rubbing his head, he agrees to try and reason with Mary Fisher, who, according to Ruth, warps women's minds and souls by writing romantic trash.

Meanwhile, through Ruth's machinations Mary has been rejected by Bobbo. Besieged with problems, Mary crawls from her chair toward the door in despair, calling to God for salvation...and finds herself at the feet of Father Ferguson, who has come to call. "Oh, bless you, Father," she sobs, kneeling, kissing his hands. She doesn't realize that he's more interested in snuggling her into the folds of his robe than saving her soul, and doesn't see him lick his chops as he looks down upon her.

Ruth, having set her plot in motion, discusses with doctors the surgical procedures required to transform her into the image of Mary Fisher, and then flies to California to begin the process.

Father Ferguson has comfortably settled into the High Tower, and spends his days depleting Mary's wine cellar. "I'm so glad you're staying here, Father," she sighs. "You're my inspiration." Mary, who was fond of caviar, is eating a cold lunch out of a tin can. She has just finished writing The Pearly Gates of Love, about a nun's struggle for the love of Jesus, and thanks Father Ferguson for the new direction her writing has taken. He suggests that she could reach a much wider audience, that she misunderstood his advice. She kneels where he is sitting--barefoot and toying with a glass

of wine--and apologizes, resting her head on his knee. "That's all right, my child," he says mildly, stroking her hair. "What I was struggling to express," he says, "was...we must glorify the flesh as well as the spirit. Before we can achieve salvation, we must know what we are...we must face the reality of our human feelings...sexual feelings." "You want me to write about sex?", Mary asks, dumbfounded. "We all have sexual feelings," he purrs seductively, "they're given to us by God." "You?", Mary asks incredulously. He smiles sensually. "I am human, Mary," he says, caressing her neck and shoulder with his bare foot. "That's blood flowing through those veins, not holy water," he says softly. "But...you're a priest." "I'm still a man... We must celebrate our human feelings..." Reaching over, he locks her in a passionate kiss. Yielding, she falls to the floor under the enthusiastic prelate, his voluminous cassock hiding all but a flash of legs.

Mary assembles her mother, Ruth's children, and Garcia (the handyman) to tell them that she is financially ruined and must sell the High Tower. Father Ferguson, unconcerned, is playing a game of chess with himself in the background. As the others leave, the priest waves bye-bye to the vanquished group, with a wicked little grin. In reply, Mary Fisher's mother frowns and sticks her tongue out at him. "Get rid of that black crow!", she snaps to Mary. "I told you priests bring bad luck!"

Now we see Ruth in surgery, and then later as her bandages are removed...to reveal Mary's face.

Mary's life is becoming a bad dream. In bed, with the priest rutting brutishly over her, we see the light go out of her eyes. Later, as he packs his things to leave, the mood is as black as the night sky. "You tempted me...you seduced a priest. You deserve to go to hell," he mutters. "I'm there already," Mary sighs. "What I want now is to be dead...I want to be as one with the seas and the stars." "My God," he says, "even when you're suicidal you're still romantic." As he leaves, Mary pointedly hands him his crucifix. "May God save you," he says, without conviction.

One stormy night while Mary sits writing--still struggling to go on--a supernatural wind blows through the tower and hurls her to her death on the rocks below. Ruth, the image now of Mary, attends Mary's funeral in a limousine. She is mistaken at first for Mary by a confused Bobbo and by Mary's own mother. Then she arranges for Bobbo's release from prison and buys the High Tower. Flaunting her affairs in front of Bobbo, who appears little more than a zombie, Ruth's plan is realized and her revenge is complete.

THE LIFE AND LOVES OF A SEA-DEVIL

♪ HM, HM, HM, SITTIN' ON THE Dock of THE... ♪
SPLT! PHHT!-HIYA, SWEETIE!! YOU COME HERE OFTEN? WHAT'S A NICE GUY LIKE YOU DOIN' ON A DOCK LIKE THIS?
WHAT'S YER SIGN? YOU AND I COULD MAKE BEAUTIFUL MUSIC TOGETHER! WHEN WILL I SEE YOU AGAIN?
I'VE HEARD OF FRESH FISH, BUT THAT WAS RIDICULOUS!!
SPLASH!

Opinions have been mixed, to say the least, about the BBC's adaptation of "The Life and Loves of a She-Devil." Some people have commented that the character of Father Ferguson, as adapted for television, seemed "empty" in comparison with the character we all felt sorry for in the book. The one thing everyone agrees about is that Tom did some "interesting" things with the part--as usual!

Here are some comments taken from British newspaper reviews of "The Life and Loves of a She-Devil":

Devil's final move ...

Julie T. Wallace as Ruth and Tom Baker as Father Ferguson as they appear in tonight's final episode of 'The Life and Loves of a She Devil' on BBC-2 from 9.25 pm (for an hour). With Bobbo (Dennis Waterman) in prison, Ruth sets about achieving a complete metamorphosis to finish Mary Fisher (Patricia Hodge) who, with her life at a low ebb, has turned to the priest for help and guidance ... but Ruth has moved in as his housekeeper to take further action in her revenge bid!

DUBLIN EVENING PRESS (11/21/86)

She-Devil was a huge success for the BBC but not everyone loved it. There were some complaints from people who found some of the scenes too lurid--particularly those involving a Catholic priest, played by Tom Baker, indulging enthusiastically in an affair with the heroine, Ruth, and her rival, Mary Fisher.

THE SUNDAY MIRROR (London) (11/2/86)

The last episode did, however, treat us to the sight of Tom Baker as a priest subverted by sex. We haven't seen enough of Baker since he stopped being Dr. Who.

THE IRISH TIMES (Dublin) (11/4/86)

The 'devilish' nature of Mary Fisher's demise took the macabre whimsy of the piece literally over the (cliff) top, which of course was the same destination Tom Baker had in mind when realising so delightedly the role of the sex-mad alcoholic priest.

THE DAILY MAIL (London) (10/29/86)

This episode should carry a health warning for all Catholics of a sensitive disposition, fans of Tom Baker's Dr. Who and anyone conditioned to think of Dennis Waterman as a natural survivor. Those who are left must not miss this closing chapter. Not only is it the best of Fay Weldon's outrageous four-parter, it is in television terms the most original production of the year.

THE SHIELDS GAZETTE (10/30/86)

The shriek you may have heard last night wasn't anyone in trouble--it was Mary Whitehouse passing out after tuning in to watch the final episode of 'The Life and Loves of a She-Devil'. Last night's finale had Tom Baker--light years away from Dr. Who--playing a man of the cloth whose prayers are answered--or so it seemed!

THE SUNDERLAND ECHO (10/30/86)

Very funny supporting roles from Tom Baker, as the naughty priest, and Liz Smith, Mary's mum. Excellent acting and a superb program--what a shame to see it go.